

THE HAND OF TRUTH

A Play For

Hermit's Cave

WRITTEN BY: Eric Falconer

CHARACTERS:

TED
BETTY BELLAMY
MULLER
THE LEADER
THE CAPTAIN
JAILER
MAN
WOMAN
VOICES: DOUBLED

SOUND:

AS INDICATED

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(S T A N D A R D O P E N I N G)

SOUND: MEN MARCHING: SOLDIERS, TO THE NUMBER OF SEVERAL DOZEN - AWAY -

TELEPHONE BELL: RECEIVER OFF HOOK - ON MIKE -

JAILER: (TO PHONE) Schweinestall Prison. . . Ja . . . Ja, this is the Gefangenwarter speaking. . . More! . . . No! I can't accept any more prisoners - it is impossible. You do not know the circumstances here. . . Yes - I know - they must be held in custody - I know that - but elsewhere, please - not here. The cells of this prison are all ^{everyone} filled - ~~all~~ of them. . . I'm not defying orders - I'm simply asking that you will consider certain natural laws. Three hundred men cannot be contained in fifteen cells. I humbly request that you send one of your officers here - to observe the impossible situation. . . But, man! - the cells are only two meters wide and four meters long, and already we have had to - (INTERRUPTED) But, sir, I'm only - (AGAIN INTERRUPTED: THEN, TIGHT-LIPPED) Very well, sir. . . Yes, sir - Allegiance to the Leader.

SOUND: PHONE RECEIVER HUNG UP -

JAILER: (BITTERLY: TO SELF) Allegiance to the Leader - but to where is he leading us?

CAPT: (AT DISTANCE) Company - haaaalt!

JAILER: Five days now - people being shot, arrested - Carl killed, too - and he was loyal to the leader - and Paul. I wonder. I wonder - if everyone said what he thinks of the party wouldn't most of us be in the prisons and prison camps. If only there were some way to know . . .

SOUND: DOOR OPENED - SMALL DETAIL MARCHES IN -

CAPT: (IN CADENCE) Hep-hep-hep - detaaaail haaaly.

(DETAIL HALTS)

CAPT: (SHARPLY) Allegiance to the Leader!

JAILER: (DULLY) Allegiance to the Leader!

CAPT: (BRISKLY) Two prisoners - here are their papers.

JAILER: But Captain, I have just talked by phone with the secret police headquarters - there is no more room here for prisoners.

CAPT: Their papers - take them!

JAILER: Please - can't they be taken -

CAPT: (BREAKING IN) Take them!

SOUND: UNFOLDING DOCUMENTS -

JAILER: The commitment papers - they do not specify the charges.

CAPT: Enemies of the state - and don't dawdle, Warten.

JAILER: But the charges? It is required of me that I -

CAPT: (FURIOUSLY) The signature fool - you see the signature; order of the Leader.

TED: (SLIGHTLY AWAY - GLIBLY) It doesn't do any good to argue with him, Turnkey - we've tried it.

JAILER: Perhaps you can inform me as to the charges against you. I must know for the records.

TED: Technically I believe the charge is that Miss Bellamy and I are communists - a fact which should come as quite a surprise to ~~my~~ our newspapers back in the United States.

JAILER: United States? You are from America?

TED: Yep - you know, land of the free - or do you know that word free. Nice word - you ought to learn it.

JAILER: Captain - you hear what he says. There must be some mistake. The young man and young lady are citizens of another country. Surely the leader doesn't -

CAPT: (INTERRUPTS, BLUSTERING) The Leader does!

JAILER: But Captain, in this case surely we should have details.

TED: Let's get this over, Turnkey. We're supposed to be communists - I wore a red necktie yesterday, and Miss Bellamy confessed to having witnessed a labor day parade
i back in the States. According to your brasshats, that makes it open-and-shut that we're reds.

JAILER: This - this is highly irregular. I don't know -

CAPT: (MOVING AWAY A BIT) It's not necessary for you to think - the order comes directly from the party headquarters.

(JAILER AND CAPTAIN AD LIB CONVERSATION OFF MIKE. BACKGROUND TO -)

TED: (SOFTLY) Take it easy, Bet - relax.

BETTY: (HELPLESSLY) Oh, Ted - I can't bluff the way you can. I'm scared. What's going to happen to us?

TED: Nothing. Quit shaking. Nothing's going to happen to us.

BETTY: But this place, Ted - it's a prison - you can't laugh that off.

TED: Hey - you sound panicky. Take it easy. The U.S. Consul will hear about it before we're here an hour - and we'll be out - pooooof: like that.

BETTY: These men are hoodlums, Ted - they don't know anything about - about -

TED: About International etiquette? No - these don't - but the boys higher up do. Their country is still on earth - even if they are running it like a slaughter house.

CAPT: (COMING IN) - and the order is over the Leader's signature.

JAILER: (COMING IN: WITH RESIGNATION) Very well, very well, very well.

CAPT: I know my duty, Warter, and you'll do well to learn yours.

JAILER: There have been so many of these - these orders. Surely the leader didn't see this one. He would certainly know of the international repercussions that might arise out of such an affair as this.

CAPT: You are suggesting that you know more than our Leader?

JAILER: No-no-no-no. I am saying that perhaps in all this stir and excitement there has been an -

CAPT: (IMPATIENTLY) I have no time to haggle with a fool. Enter the names on your books immediately.

JAILER: Very well -

(LONG PAUSE, REQUIRED BY THE WRITING)

CAPT: Now - where shall they be taken?

JAILER: Again I tell you there is no space - and certainly we couldn't put the young lady in a cell with a dozen others.

CAPT: I don't care where they are put! Lead us to the cells.

JAILER: (THOUGHTFUL) There is the other building - the old one - it adjoins this one. It might be reopened. It has been sealed up for over a century - but it could be opened.

CAPT: Then that is what we shall do.

JAILER: It's old and filthy. I must take some of the men from the cells to make room for the lady. The men can be put in the old dungeon.

CAPT: Woman or not she is an enemy of the state - and she deserves precisely the same treatment all enemies of the state receive.

JAILER: (HORRIED) You can't be thinking of -

CAPT: (INTERRUPTING) Lead the way!

JAILER: It's a dungeon, man - built five hundred years ago - it's damp and dark - infested with rats. In the name of Mercy, we can't place that woman in -

CAPT: Did you hear me?! Lead the way! (TURNING AWAY: BARKS)
Detail - at-ten-tion!

BETTY: (FETTERED) Ted - did you hear what he said? - a dungeon - dark - rats -

TED: Chin up, lady. It won't be for long.

CAPT: Detail - for-wa-a-ard!

(START VERNIER FADE)

SOUND: DETAIL MARCHING AWAY DOWN ECHOY STONE HALLWAY -

(OUT)

(FADING IN)

SOUND: TWO MEN ASSAULTING STONE WALL WITH PICKS -

CAPT: The opening is large enough for them to get thru. You may stop work, soldier.

TED: If you intend putting us in there and walling the place up again it's going to be pretty hard for your government to explain it as a practical joke.

CAPT: The prisoner will please cease talking.

TED: I don't mind your speaking of me in the third person - but I want to be certain you understand what I said.

CAPT: The Leader will be here to speak to you soon. You will do well to prepare to tell the truth.

SOUND: HEAVY IRON DOOR SQUEEKS OPEN -

JAILER: I would recommend that this door be left open, Captain - the building has been sealed for over a century. You could station a guard at -

CAPT: (BREAKING IN) You may keep your suggestions to yourself, gefangenwarter.

BETTY: (OFF - SHORT SOB) Ted - they're going to put us in there!

CAPT: This is how the Leader deals with enemies of the state.
(TURNING ASIDE) In with them.

TED: (STRUGGLING) Get your hand off of me! I swear - when our State Department -

CAPT: (OFF) In with them!

TED: You're going to regret this - every one of you!

(AD LIB: GUARD SIMULATING STRUGGLE)

SOUND: SCUFFLING: HEAVY IRON DOOR SLAMMED - LOCK -

(PAUSE)

BETTY: (SHUDDER) Oh, Ted - what's going to happen to us?

TED: Hey - off my neck, gal.

BETTY: What'll we do, Ted? What are they planning to do with us?

TED: Nothing! Now, get a grip on yourself. (PAUSE) We're safer here in the dark than we would be in the hands of those hoodlums.

BETTY: (WHISPER) But - but the jailer - he said there are rats in here.

TED: (FALSE COURAGE) I'm glad to hear it - means there's some breathing air in here.

BETTY: Oh, Ted, Ted - why have they done this to us? What have we done?

TED: (SHARPLY) Will you shut up!

BETTY: (HYSTERICALLY) They're going to kill us. That's what they're going to do. Kill us!

TED: Shut up! (PAUSE) They're just trying to find out from us who is smuggling our stories out of the country - just trying to throw a scare into us.

BETTY: ~~WITH~~ FORCED ICY CALM) In a dungeon.

TED: Yeah - what d'ya expect of a country that's been pushed backward a hundred years in a few months.

BETTY: Think of it - a century-and-a-half ago there were probably other oppressed, tortured people right here - like Jean Valjean -

TED: You're confusing this charming country with France. Lay off the romancing. If you've got to go to extremes I'd prefer the weeps.

BETTY: (LITTLE SCREAM) Ted - a rat - one brushed past me.

TED: What of it? And don't grab onto me. You can defeat any rat in mortal combat.

BETTY: (PITEOUSLY) Ted - I'm afraid.

TED: (BRAVADO) Nuts - what d'ya think you have to be afraid of? Rats and stale air. You've been in night clubs; the air's no worse in this hole - and the rats - well, we'll be talking to them if we're ~~here~~ here long. Might have a little trouble teaching them irregular verbs, but -

BETTY: Don't go on like that!

TED: Listen, kid - don't start dramatizing yourself. We're in a spot - sure - but we'll pull thru it. Let's meet things as they come. For instance, let's find a place to sit down.

MULLER: (SLIGHTLY OFF) The floor. There is no other place to sit.

(BETTY GASPS: A PAUSE ENSUES)

TED: Who said that? - and where are you?

(COMING IN)

MULLER: I'm here beside you. Don't be afraid.

BETTY: (ELECTRIFIED) Oh, Ted!

TED: I didn't say anything about being afraid, boogie man.
I rather expected a stupid trick like this. Hasn't anybody in this country got a full deck of cards. You're as stupid as the Leader if you think an obvious trick like this is going to jar us loose from our senses.

MULLER: (SOFTLY) You think I am one of the soldiers?

TED: No - I suspect you are a member of that badly misnamed group of numbskulls known as the intelligence corps.

MULLER: I am your friend.

BETTY: His voice - he doesn't sound like one of those - those ruffians, Ted.

MULLER: I am your friend - for I am a friend of those who strive for truth.

TED: How nice. Glad to know you. Any friend of truth is a friend of mine. Now, would you please dignify this conversation by giving yourself a name of some sort?

MULLER: I am Pastor Muller.

BETTY: You - you're a man of the Church and are working for the Leader!

MULLER: My only leader is up above.

TED: A charming thought, Padre - but rather obvious, don't you think? If the Leader thinks the presence of the cloth is going to break me down he's very badly mistaken - especially a preacher who's sold his church down the river to a rotten gang of ~~sadists~~ sadists.

MULLER: I serve only the truth - for I am Truth.

TED: You might as well go out for a smoke, Truth - we're not falling for your like of abbacadabra.

BETTY: (ENTRANCED) Your voice, Father - it - it's so strange.

TED: (THOUGHT) Yeah, by the way, where are you? You're speaking thru a loud speaker of some sorty- you're not in this dungeon with us.

MULLER: I'm here beside you.

TED: Give me your hand then. I can't see in this - (GASP)

BETTY: (STARTLED) Ted! What's the matter? What's wrong?

TED: His hand - I - I touched it. It's cold - clammy.

~~(PAUSE)~~

MULLER: Don't be afraid, my son. I have been imprisoned here a long, long time.

(PAUSE)

TED: (REGAINING COURAGE) Yeah?

MULLER: A long, long time.

TED: (SARCHASM) I suppose youwere walled up in this joint a hundred or so years ago.

MULLER: Yes. . . yes - for a hundred and sixty years.

MUSIC: END OF FIRST PART -

(COMMERCIAL AND)
(INTRODUCTION OF)
(THE SECOND PART)

MUSIC: INTRODUCTION TO SECOND PART -

BETTY: (SOBBING HYSTERICALLY)

TED: (SHOUTS) Betty! Don't! This is what they wanted you
to^{do}_A - don't come unraveled.

BETTY: (SHE BEGINS TO LAUGH WILDLY)

TED: Betty!

SOUND: A SHARP SLAP -

(BETTY'S HYSTERICS STOP ABRUPTLY - BUT SHE CRIES SOFTLY, CONTROLLED)

TED: Sorry, Bets. . . I'll bet your Leader will be proud of
you - scaring the hell out of this girl.

MULLER: I have not made you understand.

TED: You catch on. (CHUCKLES HUMORLESSLY) Wallied up here for
a hundred and sixty years, eh? Kinda hard on the bones, isn't
it - no sunshine vitamins for so long?

BETTY: (SOFTLY) Ted - don't. Don't joke with him. Something about
him . . .

MULLER: You - believe me . . .

BETTY: Yes - I do. . . (TRANSPORT) I do.

MULLER: I must be believed - for I am Truth.

BETTY: Tell us - about yourself, Father.

MULLER: I have lived in umbral darkness all these years - for the
day when truth will be triumphant in this country.

TED: (SUBDUED) If you're Truth, Padre, you're taking a devil of
a beating from your Leader - but I don't suppose you know
that.

BETTY: (SOFTLY) Don't, Ted.

MULLER: Leaders die as I died - but Truth lives - just as I live.

TED: I suppose that would be considered a pretty good theological equation - but it doesn't mean much to me.

MULLER: Once I raised my voice against a leader - just as you have done. That's why I was imprisoned here - over a century-and-a-half ago. I spoke the truth to a poor, deluded people. I was sent here to die. I died - but the small, small voice of truth is still alive - and as it lives, so do I live.

TED: That's a nice line of hocus-pokus, spldier - but, according to the pirates, dead men tell no tales. I'd sooner believe a pirate than an extra-legal hoodlum posing as a cleric.

MULLER: (SIGH) You still don't believe me.

TED: Right. If you're dead you've capitalized on your rigor mortis well enough to get along without sympathy from me.

BETTY: Please, Ted - there's something about him - I can't explain just what - but I want to believe him.

MULLER: Yes, my son - you must recognize Truth.

TED: Okay, Truth - you get us out of this hole and I'll play along with you - whatever your game is. Ummm - if you've been plastered up in here for all the time you've claimed, you're not such a hot escape artist yourself. See - your gaff doesn't hold water.

MULLER: Truth explains itself. I -

(PAUSE)

TED: Well - go on.

MULLER: We are about to be interrupted. The soldiers are coming.

BETTY: I don't hear anything. How do you know?

MULLER: I know.

TED: (WHISPERING) This is giving me the jimmies - even if it is a stunt.

(PAUSE)

SOUND: IRON DOOR OPENED - AWAY -

TED: You have this act neatly timed, Brother Truth.

MULLER: It is so because it has to be thus.

CAPT: (AT DISTANCE: ECHOY) Detail - fo-o-orward!

SOUND: DETAIL MARCHING IN - OVER STONE -

BETTY: At last - light.

TED: Yeah.

CAPT: (COMING IN) Detail - ha-a-alt!

(DETAIL HALTS - ONE-TWO)

CAPT: Allegiance to the Leader!

TED: Next door, buddy - we haven't any of that here.

CAPT: Silence! The Leader has come to talk to you.

TED: I knew he'd turn up when your spook couldn't make the grade.

SOUND: TWO MEN WALKING IN -

BETTY: Ted - the Father - where is he? He's gone.

CAPT: (BARKS) Detail at-ten-sh-h-hun! (PAUSE) Allegiance to the Leader!

LEADER: (COMING IN) Is this the man?

CAPT: They are both present, Leader.

LEADER: Good - good. They will tell me.

TED: Well - you must think what I know is pretty important - to come to get it yourself, Mister.

LEADER: I am the Leader! - you will address me as Leader.

TED: Okay, Mister.

CAPT: They are very offensive, Leader. We have been able to do nothing with them.

LEADER: They will tell the Leader! (TURNING IN) You have written dispatches to your papers in America that were unfriendly to the state. It is known that they were smuggled across our border. By whom?

TED: You made the dove of Peace an enemy, so it volunteered to serve me as a carrier pigeon.

CAPT: (RAGE) (EXERTION) You!

BOND: A VIOLENT SLAP)-

CAPT: (AFTER PAUSE: SMUGLY) He will speak with greater respect now, Leader.

LEADER: You were ordered to lie about the wonderful things I have done for my country. From whom did the order come?

TED: What I wrote was the truth - and if it shed light on your filthy government my purpose was served.

LEADER: Do you know what we do to enemies of the state?

TED: (WINCES) I've heard.

LEADER: You will receive the same sort of treatment if you -

MULLER: (INTERROPTS SOFTLY) He wrote the truth. That is as it should be.

LEADER: Who spoke?! Who interrupted the Leader.

MULLER: I spoke.

LEADER: Captain - who is this man - and how did he get in here?

CAPT: I - I don't know, Leader. There was no one here - I swear - and he couldn't have entered past the guards.

LEADER: (FURIOUSLY) He is here! Who are you - and how did you
in
get here?

MULLER: I am Truth - and I have been in this dungeon for over a century - waiting. I was imprisoned by another despot - one such as you.

LEADER: ~~LEADER~~ Take the man! How dare you speak in that fashion to the Leader! You will be shown how - (TALKED DOWN BY -)

MULLER: (WHO CONTINUES WITHOUT INTERRUPTION) - but I have survived - I have lived because Truth never dies - and I am here now to release the people you have enslaved - the people you have beaten, tortured, crushed. They shall rise now - because Truth outlives oppression - they shall again be free, because he is a free man whom truth makes free.

LEADER: (RAGE) Take that man! I tell you - Take that man!

CAPT: Detail - take that man.

SOUND: SHUFFLING OF FEET -

(CONFUSED AD LIB)

MAN: (AWAY) Lord in Heaven!

LEADER: (SHOUTING) Do you hear my command! Take that man! Dummheit! Dummcoopf! Take him!

MAN: (COMING IN: AGHAST) Leader - he is not a mortal. His hand - it's cold!

MULLER: (AWAY) The hand of evil shrinks from the touch of truth.

LEADER: (FROTHING) Silence that man! Captain - you hear me - silence that man!

MULLER: The voice of truth is never stilled - never.

CAPT: Detail - at-ten-n-n-n-sh-h-hun!

SOUND: HEELS CLICKING -

MULLER: The Lord's children shall be free. Born to freedom, they shall be free again.

CAPT: Guns to port!

MULLER: - And a light shall shine into even the darkest corner - and when all is known, then the people shall be free.

CAPT: Aim!

SOUND: THROWING BOLTS ON SEVERAL SPRINGFIELDS -

LEADER: (FRANTIC) Silence him! Silence him! - do you hear me -
silence him!

MULLER: I am freedom - I am Truth - neither shall die - ever -

CAPT: Fire!

SOUND: A VOLLEY OF SHOTS -

MULLER: (CONTINUES WITHOUT INTERRUPTION) - while men live - they
shall speak the truth - speak and shame the devil!

CAPT: Fire!

SOUND: ANOTHER VOLLEY -

MULLER: (FROM ABOVE) There is but one Leader and that is our
God above -

(GREAT SILENCE, EXCEPT FOR MULLER'S VOICE)

His rule is a merciful one - and will live and live and
live. Those who rob mortals of the gifts of liberty
and freedom shall die, strangled by their own lies.

(AD LIB: PHRENETIC, HYSTERICAL)

SOUND: MEN RUNNING AWAY -

LEADER: (SCREAMS) Fire! Fire again! You've missed him!

CAPT: (GOING AWAY) Men - men - halt - you're deserting your
Leader!

BEIN: (IN) (BREATHLESSLY) The man - the priest - he's still
alive. It can't be.

TED: He's alive - and going toward the Leader.

LEADER: (OFF: PANIC-STRICKEN) Stay away from me! Men! Men! Help me!

MUSIC: TAG SCENE - ESTABLISH MORE FOR FOLLOWING -

SOUND: INDISTINGUISHABLE MUMBLED OF GROUP NUMBER A HUNDRED OR SO -

BETTY: (GUARDED TONE) Ted - what's happening? What is all of this going on around us?

TED: I don't know - darned if I do - but it - it's sinister.

BETTY: All these people - why have they been brought into this dungeon?

TED: My guess is that they're the ones who were locked up in the other section of this prison.

BETTY: Do - do you think we're going to all be sealed up in this dungeon?

TED: Umm - I don't think so . Something else is going on.
(PAUSE) Gosh, look at those poor, frightened people - huddled there in a bunch. Isn't that a sorry picture?
(IRONY) They're suppose to be enemies of the state.

BETTY: This is all so eerie, so unreal - everything has been so fantastic.

TED: What - what do you think of the priest, or whatever he is?

BETTY: I don't know. I don't know what to think.

TED: (MUSING) His hand was cold . . . I touched it. . . And the shots - there were dozens of holes in his cloak - and the slugs must have gone into him - yet he's still alive.
(PAUSE) Still walking and talking, I mean.

BETTY: I'm not afraid of him, though. What do you suppose they're doing to him now?- and where is he?

TED: Torturing him I would guess - but I'm not worrying about him. Something - I don't know what - but something is taking care of him.

BETTY: I'll never forget this awful night - if I live to remember it.

TED: Boy! what a story it'd be, if I could only get it on the wire.

BETTY: It's more than a story, Ted - it's - it's the Revelation.

TED: Yeah.

SOUND: MEN MARCHING IN - IN CADENCE -

BETTY: The priest - he's still alive, Ted. They haven't killed him.

TED: Ohhh - I think I see what's up!

BETTY: What? What is it?

TED: The Leader doesn't know yet what he's up against. He's going to make a show of -

CAPT: (OFF SLIGHTLY) Detail - ha-a-a-alt!

TED: Look at the Leader's face. Whatever he has been trying to accomplish with the Father hasn't been successful.

(PAUSE)

LEADER: (AWAY - SPEAKING LOUDLY) You slime - you scum - all you who oppose my state. You are going to see to what end my enemies come.

TED: (IN WHISPERING) Just as I figured - a public execution!

BETTY: (AGHAST) Ted - can it be that this is all a dream. It just can't happen - not in the twentieth century.

TED: Keep your eyes open. Look at that Ax. They're going to behead him. Poor guy - whatever his game was, he's in for it now.

LEADER: (AWAY) This man before you has a head that has offended the state - so he shall lose it. (LOWERS VOICE) Perhaps you would like to speak the truth before you die.

MULLER: (ALSO AWAY) I am Truth - and I shall never die.

(REACTION: RENEWED MUMBLING BY PRISONERS)

LEADER: (APOPLECTIC) Captain! - have you chosen the hetman?

CAPT: Yes, Leader.

SOUND: DETAIL MARCHING: RAGGEDLY -

TED: Close your eyes, Betty.

BETTY: I - I can't. I can't.

SOUND: MEASURED BEATING OF EXECUTION DRUM

TED: Close your eyes, or you'll never be able to forget.

BETTY: I don't want to forget.

LEADER: (AWAY) Again I give you the opportunity to speak the Truth.

MULLER: My words are always the truth, for I am Truth, and I shall not die.

(AD LIB: A STIR)

(A PAUSE)

LEADER: (SHOUTS) Now!

CAPT: Hetman!

SOUND: SWISH - CLUNK, HEAD DROPS IN BASKET -

MULLER: (AWAY: CALMLY) I shall not die - not until truth rules all the world - never die until light finds the darkest abyss of civilization. My work will not be done until the people hear and know the truth.

(AD LIB: MURMUR OF TERROR - RISING) (A SCREAM)

TED: Good Lord! - his head is off - and still he speaks! still he speaks! We've gone mad - all of us - we've gone mad!

(AD LIB: CRIES MOUNT TO PEAK)

MUSIC: PANDEMONIUM - THEN OMINOUS BEHIND -

(NOTA BENE: HENCEFORTH THE LEADER IS A RAVING, Slobbering Madman - AS WHO WOULDN'T BE?)

BIZ: SPADES IN EARTH - MEN DIGGING -

(A LOW, UNEASY AD LIB OFF MIKE CONTINUES BEHIND:)

LEADER: I am the Leader - the ruler - the law - my word - it is the law - the law - are you listening to me? - the law.

CAPT: Yes, Leader. (TURNING ASIDE: SHOUTING) Dig men - faster.

LEADER: (PATHETICALLY EARNEST) It is a trick - a trick of our enemies - his severed head only seems to talk - is that not so, Captain?

CAPT: (HESITANTLY) Yes, Leader - it is a trick of our enemies.

MULLER: (OFF) The voice of truth will never be stilled.

LEADER: (RAVING) The hole is deep enough! Throw that head in!

MULLER: (OFF) The voice of Truth shall forever speak - speak and break the strongest shackles of slavery. Truth is the voice of freedom - and that voice shall never be stilled.

LEADER: Cover it! Cover it with earth.

(AD LIB: CONFUSION)

LEADER: Dummheit! You hear me! Cover him up.

CAPT: (COMING IN) His hand, Leader - the right hand -

LEADER: Yes, yes -

CAPT: The one we severed when he was - was being questioned.

LEADER: Yes, you fool - bury it, too.

CAPT: But it is gone - the men cannot find it!

LEADER: Cover that infernal head - COVER THE HEAD!

MULLER: (SPEAKS SLOWLY BEHIND EVERYTHING) I shall not die - for mine is the voice of Truth - and truth lives wherever man abides -

CAPT: (OFF SLIGHTLY) You hear the leader! Fill the pit.

BIZ: EARTH THROWN INTO PIT -

(AS THE WORK CONTINUES MULLER'S VOICE BECOMES MUFFLED - BUT BIG AND DISTINCT . . .)

MULLER: (EARTH RATTLING COLUMN) The people shall know the truth and they shall be free.

CAPT: Leader! My senses fail me. His voice seems to shake the earth beneath my feet!

MUSIC: SUSPENSE - OUT BEHIND -

SOUND: BIRDS AND GENERAL OUTDOOR SOUNDS -

WOMAN: (COMING IN) Marek - Marek - why are you not plowing?
The Leader's soldiers will see that you are not at work and -

MAN: (INTERRUPTING) Shhhhhhh. Quiet, Anna.

WOMAN: And what are you doing with your ear to the ground? You
look like - like an ostrich - with your head to the
ground that way.

MAN: I'm listening. Put your ear to the ground, too. Listen.

WOMAN: What sort of foolishness is this, Marek. Are you losing
your faculties? The Leader's soldiers will see you are
not at work.

MAN: Do as I tell you, Anna. Put your ear to the ground.

WOMAN: (EXERTION AS SHE STOOPS: MUTTERS) I don't know what has
come over you, Marek - you tell me to do a strange thing, but -
(BREAK) Marek! . . . Marek - what is it? - I hear a voice.

MAN: Then my ears were not deceiving me! You hear it too.

WOMAN: Yes, yes - what does it mean?

MAN: Just - just listen.

MULLER: (VOICE MUFFLED AND ECHOY AT SAME TIME) - and the time
has come when light must be shed in dark places. You must
know the Truth about your Leader. Truth will free you of
him -

MUSIC: SOFTLY BEHIND MULLER'S SPEECH -

- for freedom and Truth are brothers that live together
among God's children.

WOMAN: Marek - what does it mean? - what does it mean?

MUSIC: UP - ESTABLISH AND FADE TO -

SOUND: HUGE MOB - CHEERING AND HUZZAHING -

TED: This is the end of us, Betty. Say your prayer - or do whatever you'd like to do before dying.

BETTY: What do you mean, Ted? We've been released - we're free.

TED: Yeah? Look behind us?

BETTY: Behind? I don't see anything.

TED: Those two men - they've been following us. They knew we would come here where the Leader is speaking.

BETTY: But why - why is this the end of us?

TED: Don't you see? They knew we'd come to watch the crowd listening to the Leader's speech. After it's over these men are going to start a riot in our vicinity - and we'll be shot in the melee. Smart. Then the Leader's Foreign Minister will send our State Department a humble note apologizing for the accidental death of two Americans. Neat - but I don't care. I've seen enough to know that the Leader's sort of rule is doomed.

BETTY: Ted - no one will ever know what we saw. If only we could write a record of it.

TED: Nobody'd believe it - what we saw - but the world will hear about that man who called himself Truth. See those signs pasted on ever post ~~pane~~ and wall?

BETTY: Yes - but what? . . . I haven't read them.

TED: It's a warning - proclaiming that any citizen caught with his ear to the ground will be put to death immediately.

BETTY: I don't understand. What does that mean?

TED: Simple - the priest was buried - and his voice is still ringing - echoing in the earth.

BETTY: Ted! It's a miracle!

SOUND: LOUD, SUSTAINED CHEER -

TED: The leader - he's standing on the balcony!

(CHEER DIES OUT)

LEADER: (AT GREAT DISTANCE: ORATING LIKE FURY) My countrymen!
Our state is in order - and we are ready to go forward!
We have right on our side - and truth on our side - and
we are going forward!

(MUMBLING STARTS AND GROWS IN CROWD - ONE WOMAN SCREAMS)

(CHAOS)

TED: Betty - the hand - the hand of truth - it's floating
thru the air! - toward the Leader!

BERN: He sees it! The hand is raised over the Leader's head!

MULLER: (HIS VOICE LOUD? FIRM, ECHOS AS THOUGH FROM LOUDSPEAKER)
He took the name of Truth - but I am Truth and I live
with you all. Seek the truth in what you are told - and
when you know you will be freed. My hand shall always
be poised over this man you call Leader - and when you
come to know Truth, then my hand shall fall! Magna
est veritas, et praevalebit!

TED: (SOFTLY) Magna est veritas, et praevalebit - Truth is
mighty - and will prevail!

MUSIC: UP TO TRIUMPHANT CONCLUSION -

(C O M M E R C I A L A N D S I G N - O F F)